

2009 Energy Conservation and Weatherization Program FAQ

April 3, 2009

Q. Is BPI accreditation allowable for substitution for INCAA training?

A. Only if BPI accreditation has been achieved through a training program sponsored by IHCD. The BPI certification in and of itself does not cover many of the aspects of Indiana's weatherization program.

Q. Training – If our employees have already completed enough training to test for the BA, do they need to participate in the six-week BA training program also? We have other employees who have taken part in many of the BT trainings. Will they be required to participate in the three days of BT training?

A. All auditors must either complete their BA certification through Indiana's existing Weatherization training or they must complete the 6-week auditor training provided through this funding. The same sort of policy applies to contractors and installers. If a contractor or installer is not currently certified as either a Heating Technician or Building Technician through the training offered by the Indiana Weatherization program, and does not want to go through the existing training to achieve these certifications prior to working within the program, they will be required to take the 3-day training offered by IHCD.

Q. The RFP mentions training requirements for Inspectors and crew workers thru INCAA. If awarded the grant, are there monies available for Training and Technical Assistance as with a typical WAP grant?

A. Indiana does not award training and technical assistance money to sub-grantees. Instead, we ensure that the costs of training sub-grantees' employees and sub-contractors are covered through contracts between IHCD and the training providers.

Q. The existing training is being solely performed at INCAA – will this be expanded to other locations around the State [local level]?

A. Yes, the training will extend to other regions of the State. IHCD is still developing its strategy for delivering training services to the regions of the State where they are most needed.

Q. Can a general local unit of government apply?

A. No.

Q. What if the general local unit of government has an agency or department that currently administers the State's Weatherization Program for IHCD?

A. Any not-for-profit agency or public agency that has been administering a Weatherization Assistance Program grant for IHCD is eligible to apply for the Energy Conservation Program.

Q. Will grantees have to do weekly wage reporting to the Department of Labor, as is required by the Davis-Bacon Act?

A. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act ("ARRA") states that all laborers and mechanics employed by contractors under contracts funded in whole or in part through the Act shall be paid wages at rates no less than the wages prevailing for such projects in the locality. It is not clear whether the Department of Labor will require submission of weekly statements of wages paid the prior week, but at a minimum IHCD will require contractors and subcontractors to maintain records necessary to document compliance with the prevailing wage requirement. Such compliance must be certified with the contractors regular reports to IHCD.

Q. We are unclear about the funding periods for the contract. The RFP outlines that 100% of units should be completed by 3/31/10, yet the funds can be expended until 3/31/12. Can you explain the expenditure and extension process?

A. The requirements for completion of units refers to the specific award made to a sub-grantee, who will be required to meet the stated benchmarks during the initial sub-grant period (May 1, 2009* to March 31, 2010). IHCD plans another funding round in early 2010 for another year of ARRA funding for its Weatherization Program, and it will use information about the initial sub-grantee's accomplishment of the stated benchmarks to determine which sub-grantees may be eligible for a renewal of the ARRA funding. The "Period of Availability" portion of the RFP refers to the period in which DOE funds will remain available to be awarded to States that have demonstrated they can efficiently obligate the funds to compliant projects that can be implemented quickly and that create or retain the greatest number of jobs. For purposes of this RFP, the following definitions apply: Expended - When funds are claimed from IHCD as a result of work being completed. Committed - When funds are obligated by IHCD as a result of evaluating applications for funding under an RFP. Obligated - when IHCD has issued a contract, or a sub-grantee has completed a purchase of goods or services, or a sub-grantee has entered a contract for services and the services have begun, all of which support the conclusion that a promise to pay has been incurred.

*Date subject to release of funds by the Department of Energy

Q. Are there monies available for equipment and vehicles purchases thru this grant?

A. IHCDCA expects that applicants will have sufficient resources to perform the number weatherization projects proposed in their application, and will not likely approve funding for acquiring general equipment and vehicles. If a sub-grantee requires additional equipment or vehicles, IHCDCA encourages the leasing of such equipment or vehicles, given the temporary nature of the ARRA funds. The cost of the lease may be included in the project budget, but it will be counted against the average cost per home and must be preapproved by IHCDCA and DOE.

Q. Budgeting - Are trucks and equipment to be figured into base operations?

A. If equipment (items have a unit cost of \$5,000 or more) are purchased using grant funds, the purchase must:

- Have preapproval by IHCDCA and DOE
- Have depreciation tracked and reported over the useful life of the piece of equipment
- Either be used solely for the purposes of the Department of Energy's Weatherization program; or, be cost allocated so that the grant is reimbursed for use of the equipment by other programs.
- Be counted against the average cost per home by spreading the purchase price of the vehicle across all completions.

Whenever possible, it is recommended that grantees consider leasing as opposed to purchases.

Q. Our agency doesn't own a blower door tester or the camera. Does the allocation allow for us to budget purchasing these?

A. Yes, but these purchases must come out of your average cost per home. So for instance if you are doing 20 homes and you have to purchase a \$20K piece of equipment, you would reduce your average cost per home to \$4,000. In addition, these purchases must be preapproved by IHCDCA and DOE and the agency must track the depreciation and inventory of any equipment purchased through the grant funds. For these reasons, IHCDCA strongly discourages entities from using the sub-grant funds for major purchases that are not going directly into the homes.

Q. What will be the rules for ARRA funding for weatherizing homes that have been previously weatherized? How recently can a home have received Wx services and still qualify for ARRA Wx services?

A. Homes that have been previously weatherized under a Federal program during the period from September 30, 1975, through September 30, 1994, may receive further financial assistance for weatherization under the ARRA award.

Q. The RFP states that 10% of the unit goals must be completed by August. Will the trainings be available early enough in the year in order to train workers, get them in the field and allow the chosen providers to accomplish this goal?

A. IHCDCA has been working on a number of strategies to ensure that sufficient training opportunities will be available to assist sub-grantees in meeting the unit completion goals stated in the RFP, and will adjust the benchmarks as needed if the training schedule has interfered with sub-grantees' completion rates.

Q. How reimbursement is handled, is this strictly an actual cost only reimbursement like the typical WAP grant or is there a unit price payment per measure like some of the utility programs or some combination?

A. IHCDCA will be reimbursing based on actual costs, just like the current Weatherization Assistance program. If a grantee subcontracts for a service, such as auditing at an agreed per home audit rate, it could be billed as a unit rate.

Q. Is the necessary reporting software and forms being provided by IHCDCA or will this software need to be purchased?

A. It will be provided by IHCDCA.

Q. At what level will the current WX providers be funded without the additional ARRA funds?

A. Current grantees will be receiving roughly \$7.6 Million in regular DOE allocation for the current program year.

Q. Will a centralized list of contractors, auditors, and administrators be available?

A. IHCDCA will publish the names of auditors and contractors that have satisfactorily completed training through IHCDCA sponsored training programs.

Q. Will all the work orders be done by the same firms/ NGO's as do the actual work? Will final check-off inspections and verification be done by the same folks as are to do the work?

A. Work orders are drawn up either by auditors or by program managers (this is a decision made by the sub-grantee). Final inspections and interim inspections are the responsibility of the auditor.

Q. Can an entity bid for the work order and inspection portions of the program separately? Does that entity need to be a not-for profit?

A. Entities may bid for both the installation and inspection pieces through this program.

Q. Are both entities, with respect to accountability, are the inspector and the contracted labor supposed to be one and the same organization or separate?

A. Grantees are encouraged to ensure that separate firms are used for the audit and for the installation portions of the job, so as to ensure accurate, reasonable work orders and audits.

Q. Why is it necessary for said organization to be 501-C-3 organization as apposed to LLCs, Incorporations and subchapter (S) incorporations?

A. Organizations are only required to be not-for-profit. The decision to utilize not-for-profits is part of the federal authorization of these funds.

Q. What will be the deadline for organization that have these bids in by 15 APR to be granted their not-for-profit (501C3) designation?

A. Organizations must have their not-for-profit designation prior to expending any grant funding.

Q. What happened to the \$6500 average cost per home that was mandated by the legislation?

A. The average cost per home was not mandated by legislation; rather it was authorized as an amount up to \$6,500. After a review of program efficiency, and in an attempt to serve as many households as possible, Indiana has chosen to use an average cost per home of \$5,000.

Q. The \$6,500.00 amount included in the RFP – is that an average cost per job or maximum amount?

A. Indiana will permit an average cost per unit of \$5,000.00.

Q. In reading the material put out this week, am I understanding that you give us a listing of the homes that you want to receive assistance through this program? We do not distribute pre-applications for families interested?

A. IHCD will use existing Energy Assistance Program wait lists to generate a list of potential clients in a specific geographic area, which will be shared with sub-grantees in that area. This will prevent sub-grantees from having to market the program and do client intake. It will, however, necessitate that each sub-grantee use the referral list to identify those interested in receiving weatherization assistance.

Q. How does IHCD plan to ensure only American citizens get these jobs?

A. IHCDCA will ensure that appropriate background checks are performed on any training applicants, which includes requiring all sub-grantees to follow Federal requirements for verifying employability status of workers.

Q. If no one requests funds for a particular county or area, what will happen with those funds?

A. IHCDCA intends to see that all counties are covered with contractors to expend the amount allocated to per the RFP. If does not happen, IHCDCA will try to identify a qualified contractor with capacity to perform the work in the under-served area on a case-by-case basis.

Q. Follow up question: Would IHCDCA consider asking counties ahead of the RFP if all counties will have someone applying for funds?

A. No, IHCDCA is not asking counties to identify entities that will serve that county. We will wait to see the responses to the RFP, before taking steps to address any gaps.

Q. Centralized Purchasing - Will there be an exemption for ancillary purchases?

A. If by “ancillary” purchases, you mean general supplies, it is unlikely those will be included in the centralized purchasing requirement. The purpose of central purchasing is to obtain volume discounts by bulk purchases of large-ticket items frequently used in the WAP program (e.g. Furnaces, Water Heaters, Insulation).

Q. How will the centralized purchasing work?

A. IHCDCA is working with various other State agencies to develop and finalize this portion of the RFP and will provide more information as it is available.

Q. If multiple agencies are going together to present a RFP how should it be spelled out?

A. One entity should be designated as the lead agency, to administer the sub-grant and serve as fiscal agent for the collaborative. IHCDCA will expect to see a formal cooperation or collaborative agreement executed by all of the entities that form part of the group. Although the lead agency will be the “sub-grantee,” each of the collaborating entities must commit to complying with all requirements for the ARRA weatherization program, are accountable for fund expenditures, and must disclose their staff and board members, as well as their sub-contractors who will be involved in the program.

Q. Are 501 C3's the only non-profits that can apply?

A. No, other not-for-profit entities may apply, if they meet the other eligibility requirements in the RFP.

Q. Can sub-grantees exceed the amount per job if other funds are used with them?

A. Other funds can be used per section 2.5 – Budget. All other funding must be tracked separately. The \$5,000 average cost per home must be maintained for any funds provided through weatherization funding.

Q. There is concern that the 15% Health and Safety allowance will be spent very quickly and not be able to cover all Health and Safety needs.

A. The 15% relates to the entire grant allocation [program delivery cost] – and is not limited per unit. Careful spending is encouraged . Some homes will need to be deferred if their health and safety issues cannot be fully addressed.